

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

IO-13 SAA-02 SSM-03 HA-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /088 W

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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1273

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 1845

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PEPR, IS, JO

SUBJECT: HEBRON'S MAYOR ON THE PEACE PROCESS

SUMMARY: WEST BANK LEADERS WOULD PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS ONLY IF ISRAEL ACCEPTS PRINCIPLES OF WITHDRAWAL AND PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION, ACCORDING TO HEBRON'S MAYOR QAWASIMA. THE MAYORS WOULD REACT PASSIVELY SHOULD THE WEST BANK BE RETURNED TO JORDAN. IN ANY CASE, EVENTUAL LINKS TO JORDAN ARE CERTAIN IN HIS VIEW. SETTLEMENTS, NOT IMMIGRATION, ARE THE MAYOR'S GREATEST CONCERN. IN MANY WAYS, THE MAYOR ADMITS, PALESTINIANS UNDER ISRAELI OCCUPATION ARE FREER THAN PALESTINIANS EXILED ABROAD. END SUMMARY

1. IN A RELAXED, PRIVATE CONVERSATION AT HIS HOME JUNE 27, MAYOR FAHD QAWASIMA CONVEYED TO CONGEN HIS CURRENT VIEWS OF THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. AFTER HAVING WRESTED SEVERAL CONCESSIONS FROM DEFMIN WEIZMAN, INCLUDING RETURN OF THE EXILED DR. NATHSAH, THE PREVIOUS WEEK, QAWASIMA WAS
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UNUSUALLY CONFIDENT AND RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC.

2. THE MAYORS, ACCORDING TO QAWASIMA, ARE INFLUENCED IN THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE PEACE PROCESS BY THE PLO, JORDAN, ISRAEL, THE ARAB STATES AND THEIR LOCAL CONSTITUENTS. WITHOUT SUPPORT FROM SEVERAL OF THESE PARTIES, THEY COULD NOT BEAR THE BURDEN OF NEGOTIATIONS. ACCEPTANCE BY ISRAEL

OF THE TWO PRINCIPLES OF WITHDRAWAL AND SELF-DETERMINATION WOULD PERMIT HIMSELF AND HIS COLLEAGUES TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE, THE MAYOR SAID. ALTERNATIVELY, SHOULD THE ISRAELIS WITHDRAW IN FAVOR OF JORDAN, THEN WEST BANK LEADERS WOULD ADOPT A PASSIVE RESPONSE. IN THE LATTER CASE, HOWEVER, THEY WOULD NOT "SIGN" ANY AGREEMENT.

3. THE MAYOR STRESSED HIS OWN GOOD TIES WITH THE KING. AFTER HIS MEETING WITH WEIZMAN, THE MAYOR SAID HE WAS QUERIED INDIRECTLY BY GOJ PM BADRAN ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE KING AND HAD REASSURED THE JORDANIANS ABOUT WEIZMAN'S WEST BANK INITIATIVE. QAWASIMA REITERATED HIS FEELING THAT ECONOMICS AND KIN WOULD EVENTUALLY TIE THE WEST BANK TO JORDAN IN ANY CASE.

4. THE MAYOR SAID WEIZMAN HAD GONE A LONG WAY TO DISARM CRITICS OF THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION BY HIS RECENT CONCESSIONS IN NABLUS AND HEBRON. HE ADMITTED THAT IRONICALLY HE WAS FREER TO EXPRESS HIS POLITICAL VIEWS UNDER ISRAELI OCCUPATION THAN MOST PALESTINIANS LIVING IN FRATERNAL ARAB COUNTRIES. THE RESIDUAL PROBLEM, UNDER EITHER ISRAEL RULE OR JORDANIAN RULE, WAS TO FIND A POLITICAL EXPRESSION OF THE PALESTINIAN IDENTITY, THE MAYOR SAID.

5. ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, AND THE INEVITABLE ALIENATION OF LAND THEY ENTAILLED, WERE THE CONFIDENTIAL

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REAL THREAT TO THE PALESTINIAN CHARACTER OF THE WEST BANK. QAWASIMA SAID WHILE MANY ARABS WERE IMMIGRATING, LESS THAN ONE PERCENT LEFT PERMANENTLY, ACCORDING TO THE MAYOR, SINCE PALESTINIANS WITH WEST BANK ID CARDS SOON LEARN THAT EXILES OR REFUGEES WOULD "TRADE EVERYTHING THEY OWN FOR THE RIGHT TO RETURN TO PALESTINE."
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